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Hee Was as Regents
but Now first as Deus.
IOHN DONNE
AT THE AGE OF 43
Taken from the frontispiece to
LXXX SERMONS published in
1640 by Richard Royston &
Richard Marriot

LOVE POEMS

of

JOHN DONNE

WITH some account of his
life taken from the writings
in 1639 of IZAAK WALTON

SOHO
THE NONESUCH PRESS
30 Gerrard Street
1923

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HEXASTICHON BIBLIOPOLAE

I SEE IN HIS LAST PREACHED AND PRINTED BOOK
HIS PICTURE IN A SHEET; IN *PAUL'S* I LOOK,
AND SEE HIS STATUE IN A SHEET OF STONE;
AND SURE HIS BODY IN THE GRAVE HATH ONE.
THOSE SHEETS PRESENT HIM DEAD: THESE IF YOU BUY
YOU HAVE HIM LIVING TO ETERNITY.

JO. MAR.

THE LIFE OF DR. JOHN DONNE
abridged from that written by
IZAAK WALTON

MASTER JOHN DONNE was born in London, in the year 1573, of good and virtuous parents; and, though his own learning and other multiplied merits may justly appear sufficient to dignify both himself and his posterity, yet the reader may be pleased to know that his father was masculinely and lineally descended from a very ancient family in Wales, where many of his name now live, that deserve, and have great reputation in that country.

By his mother he was descended of the family of the famous and learned Sir Thomas More, sometime Lord Chancellor of England: as also, from that worthy and laborious judge Rastall, who left posterity the vast statutes of the law of this nation most exactly abridged.

He had his first breeding in his father's house, where a private tutor had the care of him, until the tenth year of his age; and, in his eleventh year, was sent to the University of Oxford; having at that time a good command both of the French and Latin tongue. This, and some other of his remarkable abilities, made one then give this censure of him: That this age had brought forth another Picus Mirandola; of whom story says that he was rather born than made wise by study.

There he remained for some years in Hart Hall, having, for the advancement of his studies, tutors of several sciences to attend and instruct him, till time made him capable, and his learning expressed in public exercises declared him worthy, to receive his first degree in the schools, which he forbore by advice from his friends, who, being for their religion of the Romish persuasion, were conscionably averse to some parts of the oath that is always tendered at those times, and not to be refused by those that expect the titulary honour of their studies.

About the fourteenth year of his age he was transplanted from Oxford to Cambridge, where, that he might receive nourishment from both soils, he stayed till his seventeenth year; all which time

he was a most laborious student, often changing his studies, but endeavouring to take no degree, for the reasons formerly mentioned.

About the seventeenth year of his age he was removed to London, and then admitted into Lincoln's Inn, with an intent to study the law; where he gave great testimonies of his wit, his learning, and of his improvement in that profession; which never served him for other use than an ornament and self-satisfaction.

His father died before his admission into this society, and, being a merchant, left him his portion in money. (It was £3000.)

About a year following he resolved to travel; and the Earl of Essex going first to Cales, and after the island voyages, the first anno 1596, the second 1597, he took the advantage of those opportunities, waited upon his lordship, and was an eye-witness of those happy and unhappy employments.

But he returned not back into England till he had stayed some years, first in Italy, and then in Spain, where he made many useful observations of those countries, their laws and manner of government, and returned perfect in their languages.

The time that he spent in Spain was, at his first going into Italy, designed for travelling to the Holy Land, and for viewing Jerusalem and the sepulchre of our Saviour. But at his being in the farthest parts of Italy, the disappointment of company, or of a safe convoy, or the uncertainty of returns of money into those remote parts, denied him that happiness, which he did often occasionally mention with a deploration.

Not long after his return into England, that exemplary pattern of gravity and wisdom, the Lord Ellesmere, then Keeper of the Great Seal, the Lord Chancellor of England, taking notice of his learning, languages, and other abilities, and much affecting his person and behaviour, took him to be his chief secretary; supposing and intending it to be an introduction to some more weighty employment in the State; for which, his Lordship did often protest, he thought him very fit.

Nor did his Lordship in this time of Master Donne's attendance upon him, account him to be so much his servant, as to forget he was his friend; and, to testify it, did always use him with much courtesy, appointing him a place at his own table, to which he esteemed his company and discourse to be a great ornament.

He continued that employment for the space of five years, being daily useful, and not mercenary to his friend. During which time, he—I dare not say unhappily—fell into such a liking, as—with her approbation—increased into a love, with a young gentlewoman that lived in that family, who was niece to the Lady Ellesmere, and daughter to Sir George More, then Chancellor of the Garter and Lieutenant of the Tower.

Sir George had some intimation of it, and, knowing prevention to be a great part of wisdom, did therefore remove her with much haste from that to his own house at Lothesley, in the County of Surrey; but too late, by reason of some faithful promises which were so interchangeably passed, as never to be violated by either party.

These promises were only known to themselves; and the friends of both parties used much diligence, and many arguments, to kill or cool their affections to each other: but in vain; for love is a flattering mischief, that hath denied aged and wise men a foresight of those evils that too often prove to be the children of that blind father; a passion, that carries us to commit errors with as much ease as whirlwinds move feathers, and begets in us an unwearied industry to the attainment of what we desire. And such an industry did, notwithstanding much watchfulness against it, bring them secretly together,—I forbear to tell the manner how,—and at last to a marriage too, without the allowance of those friends, whose approbation always was, and ever will be necessary, to make even a virtuous love become lawful.

And, that the knowledge of their marriage might not fall, like an unexpected tempest, on those that were unwilling to have it so; and that pre-apprehensions might make it the less enormous when it was known, it was purposely whispered into the ears of many that it was so, yet by none that could affirm it. But, to put a period to the jealousies of Sir George,—doubt often begetting more restless thoughts than the certain knowledge of what we fear,—the news was, in favour to Mr. Donne, and with his allowance, made known to Sir George by his honourable friend and neighbour, Henry, Earl of Northumberland; but it was to Sir George so immeasurably unwelcome, and so transported him, that, as though his passion of anger and inconsideration might exceed theirs of love and error, he

presently engaged his sister, the Lady Ellesmere, to join with him to procure her lord to discharge Mr. Donne of the place he held under his Lordship. This request was followed with violence; and though Sir George was remembered that errors might be over-punished, and desired therefore to forbear till second considerations might clear some scruples, yet he became restless until his suit was granted, and the punishment executed. And though the Lord Chancellor did not, at Mr. Donne's dismission, give him such a commendation as the great Emperor Charles the Fifth did of his Secretary Eraso, when he parted with him to his son and successor, Philip the Second, saying, 'That in his Eraso, he gave to him a greater gift than all his estate, and all the kingdoms which he then resigned to him;' yet the Lord Chancellor said, 'He parted with a friend, and such a secretary as was fitter to serve a king than a subject.'

Immediately after his dismission from his service he sent a sad letter to his wife, to acquaint her with it; and after the subscription of his name, writ,

John Donne, Anne Donne, Un-done;

And God knows it proved too true; for this bitter physic of Mr. Donne's dismission was not enough to purge out all Sir George's choler; for he was not satisfied till Mr. Donne and his sometime com-pupil in Cambridge, that married him, namely, Samuel Brooke, who was after Doctor in Divinity and Master of Trinity College, and his brother, Mr. Christopher Brooke, sometime Mr. Donne's chamber-fellow in Lincoln's Inn, who gave Mr. Donne his wife, and witnessed the marriage, were all committed to three several prisons.

Mr. Donne was first enlarged, who neither gave rest to his body or brain, nor to any friend in whom he might hope to have an interest, until he had procured an enlargement for his two imprisoned friends.

He was now at liberty, but his days were still cloudy: and being past these troubles, others did still multiply upon him; for his wife was—to her extreme sorrow—detained from him; and though with Jacob he endured not a hard service for her, yet he lost a good one, and was forced to make good his title, and to get possession of her by a long and restless suit in law; which proved troublesome and

sadly chargeable to him, whose youth, and travel, and needless bounty had brought his estate into a narrow compass.

It is observed, and most truly, that silence and submission are charming qualities, and work most upon passionate men; and it proved so with Sir George; for these, and a general report of Mr. Donne's merits, together with his winning behaviour, which, when it would entice, had a strange kind of elegant irresistible art;—these and time had so dispassionated Sir George, that as the world had approved his daughter's choice, so he also could not but see a more than ordinary merit in his new son; and this at last melted him into so much remorse,—for love and anger are so like agues, as to have hot and cold fits; and love in parents, though it may be quenched, yet it is easily re-kindled, and expires not till death denies mankind a natural heat,—that he laboured his son's restoration to his place; using to that end both his own and his sister's power to her lord; but with no success, for his answer was 'That though he was unfeignedly sorry for what he had done, yet it was inconsistent with his place and credit to discharge and re-admit servants at the request of passionate petitioners.'

Sir George's endeavour for Mr. Donne's re-admission was by all means to be kept secret; for men do more naturally reluct for errors than submit to put on those blemishes that attend their visible acknowledgement.—But, however, it was not long before Sir George appeared to be so far reconciled as to wish their happiness, and not to deny them his paternal blessing, but yet refused to contribute any means that might conduce to their livelihood.

Mr. Donne's estate was the greater part spent in many and chargeable travels, books, and dear-bought experience: he out of all employment that might yield a support for himself and wife, who had been curiously and plentifully educated; both their natures generous, and accustomed to confer, and not to receive, courtesies: these and other considerations, but chiefly that his wife was to bear a part in his sufferings, surrounded him with many sad thoughts, and some apparent apprehensions of want.

But his sorrows were lessened and his wants prevented by the seasonable courtesy of their noble kinsman, Sir Francis Wolly, of Pirford, in Surrey, who entreated them to a cohabitation with him, where they remained with much freedom to themselves, and equal

content to him, for some years; and as their charge increased—she had yearly a child—so did his love and bounty.

It hath been observed by wise and considering men that wealth hath seldom been the portion, and never the mark to discover good people; but that Almighty God, who disposeth all things wisely, hath of his abundant goodness denied it—He only knows why—to many whose minds He hath enriched with the greater blessings of knowledge and virtue, as the fairer testimonies of his love to mankind: and this was the present condition of this man of so excellent erudition and endowments; whose necessary and daily expenses were hardly reconcilable with his uncertain and narrow estate. Which I mention, for that at this time there was a most generous offer made him for the moderating of his worldly cares; the declaration of which shall be the next employment of my pen.

[Dr. Morton, the most laborious and learned Bishop of Durham,] sent to Mr. Donne, and entreated to borrow an hour of his time for a conference the next day. After their meeting there was not many minutes passed before he spake to Mr. Donne to this purpose: 'Mr. Donne, the occasion of sending for you is to propose to you 'what I have often revolved in my own thought since I last saw you: 'which, nevertheless, I will not declare but upon this condition, that 'you shall not return me a present answer, but forbear three days, 'and bestow some part of that time in fasting and prayer; and after 'a serious consideration of what I shall propose, then return to me 'with your answer. Deny me not, Mr. Donne; for it is the effect 'of a true love, which I would gladly pay as a debt due for yours 'to me.'

This request being granted, the Doctor expressed himself thus:—

'Mr. Donne, I know your education and abilities; I know your 'expectation of a State employment; and I know your fitness for it; 'and I know, too, the many delays and contingencies that attend 'Court promises: and let me tell you that my love, begot by our 'long friendship and your merits, hath prompted me to such an in-'quisition after your present temporal estate as makes me no stranger 'to your necessities, which I know to be such as your generous spirit 'could not bear if it were not supported with a pious patience. You 'know I have formerly persuaded you to waive your Court hopes, and 'enter into holy orders; which I now again persuade you to embrace,

'with this reason added to my former request: The King hath yes-
'terday made me Dean of Gloucester, and I am also possessed of
'a benefice, the profits of which are equal to those of my deanery;
'I will think my deanery enough for my maintenance,—who am,
'and resolved to die, a single man,—and will quit my benefice, and
'estate you in it, which the patron is willing I shall do, if God shall
'incline your heart to embrace this motion. Remember, Mr. Donne,
'no man's education or parts make him too good for this employment,
'which is to be an ambassador for the God of glory; that God who
'by a vile death opened the gates of life to mankind. Make me no
'present answer; but remember your promise, and return to me the
'third day with your resolution.'

At the hearing of this, Mr. Donne's faint breath and perplexed countenance give a visible testimony of an inward conflict; but he performed his promise, and departed without returning an answer till the third day, and then his answer was to this effect:—

'My most worthy and most dear friend, since I saw you I have
'been faithful to my promise, and have also meditated much of your
'great kindness, which hath been such as would exceed even my
'gratitude; but that it cannot do; and more I cannot return you;
'and I do that with an heart full of humility and thanks, though I
'may not accept of your offer: but, sir, my refusal is not for that
'I think myself too good for that calling, for which kings, if they
'think so, are not good enough; nor for that my education and
'learning, though not eminent, may not, being assisted with God's
'grace and humility, render me in some measure fit for it: but I
'dare make so dear a friend as you are my confessor. Some irregu-
'larities of my life have been so visible to some men, that though I
'have, I thank God, made my peace with Him by penitential resolu-
'tions against them, and by the assistance of his grace banished them
'my affections; yet this, which God knows to be so, is not so visible
'to man as to free me from their censures, and it may be that sacred
'calling from a dishonour. And besides, whereas it is determined
'by the best of casuists that God's glory should be the first end, and
'a maintenance the second motive to embrace that calling, and
'though each man may propose to himself both together, yet the
'first may not be put last without a violation of conscience, which he
'that searches the heart will judge. And truly my present condition

'is such that if I ask my own conscience whether it be reconcilable 'to that rule, it is at this time so perplexed about it, that I can 'neither give myself nor you an answer. You know, sir, who says, '"Happy is that man whose conscience doth not accuse him for that 'thing which he does." To these I might add other reasons that 'dissuade me, but I crave your favour that I may forbear to express 'them, and thankfully decline your offer.'

This was his present resolution, but the heart of man is not in his own keeping; and he was destined to this sacred service by an higher hand—a hand so powerful as at last forced him to a compliance: of which I shall give the reader an account before I shall give a rest to my pen.

Mr. Donne and his wife continued with Sir Francis Wolly till his death: a little before which time Sir Francis was so happy as to make a perfect reconciliation betwixt Sir George and his forsaken son and daughter; Sir George conditioning by bond to pay to Mr. Donne £800 at a certain day, as a portion with his wife, or £20 quarterly for their maintenance as the interest for it, till the said portion was paid.

Most of those years that he lived with Sir Francis he studied the Civil and Canon Laws; in which he acquired such a perfection, as was judged to hold proportion with many who had made that study the employment of their whole life.

Sir Francis being dead, and that happy family dissolved, Mr. Donne took for himself a house in Mitcham, near to Croydon in Surrey, a place noted for good air and choice company: there his wife and children remained; and for himself he took lodgings in London, near to Whitehall, whither his friends and occasions drew him very often, and where he was as often visited by many of the nobility and others of this nation, who used him in their counsels of greatest consideration, and with some rewards for his better subsistence.

Nor did our own nobility only value and favour him, but his acquaintance and friendship was sought for by most ambassadors of foreign nations, and by many other strangers, whose learning or business occasioned their stay in this nation.

He was much importuned by many friends to make his constant residence in London; but he still denied it, having settled his dear wife and children at Mitcham, and near some friends that were

bountiful to them and him; for they, God knows, needed it: and that you may the better now judge of the then present condition of his mind and fortune, I shall present you with an extract collected out of some few of his many letters.

'. . . *And the reason why I did not send an answer to your last week's letter* 'was, *because it then found me under too great a sadness; and at present* 'tis *thus with me: There is not one person, but myself, well of my family:* 'I *have already lost half a child, and, with that mischance of hers, my wife* 'has *fallen into such a discomposure as would afflict her too extremely, but* 'that *the sickness of all her other children stupefies her—of one of which, in* 'good *faith, I have not much hope; and these meet with a fortune so ill-* 'provided *for physic, and such relief, that if God should ease us with burials,* 'I *know not how to perform even that: but I flatter myself with this hope,* 'that *I am dying too; for I cannot waste faster than by such griefs. As* 'for,——

'*From my Hospital at Mitcham,*

'*Aug.* 10. JOHN DONNE.'

Before Mr. Donne's going into France, at his being there, and after his return, many of the nobility and others that were powerful at Court, were watchful and solicitous to the King for some secular employment for him. The King had formerly both known and put a value upon his company, and had also given him some hopes of a State employment; being always much pleased when Mr. Donne attended him, especially at his meals, where there were usually many deep discourses of general learning, and very often friendly disputes, or debates of religion, betwixt his Majesty and those divines whose places required their attendance on him at those times, particularly the Dean of the Chapel, who then was Bishop Montague—the publisher of the learned and the eloquent works of his Majesty—and the most Reverend Doctor Andrews, the late learned Bishop of Winchester, who was then the king's almoner.

About this time there grew many disputes that concerned the oath of supremacy and allegiance, in which the King had appeared, and engaged himself by his public writings now extant; and his Majesty discoursing with Mr. Donne concerning many of the reasons

which are usually urged against the taking of those oaths, apprehended such a validity and clearness in his stating the questions, and his answers to them, that his Majesty commanded him to bestow some time in drawing the arguments into a method, and then to write his answers to them; and, having done that, not to send, but be his own messenger, and bring them to him. To this he presently and diligently applied himself, and within six weeks brought them to him under his own handwriting, as they be now printed; the book bearing the name of *Pseudo-Martyr*, printed anno 1610.

When the King had read and considered that book, he persuaded Mr. Donne to enter into the ministry; to which, at that time, he was, and appeared, very unwilling, apprehending it—such was his mistaken modesty—to be too weighty for his abilities: and though his Majesty had promised him a favour, and many persons of worth mediated with his Majesty for some secular employment for him,—to which his education had apted him,—and particularly the Earl of Somerset, when in his greatest height of favour; who being then at Theobald's with the King, where one of the clerks of the council died that night, the Earl posted a messenger for Mr. Donne to come to him immediately, and at Mr. Donne's coming said, 'Mr. Donne, to testify the reality of my affection, and my purpose to prefer you, stay in this garden till I go up to the King and bring you word that you are clerk of the council; doubt not my doing this, for I know the King loves you, and know the King will not deny me.' But the King gave a positive denial to all requests, and, having a discerning spirit, replied, 'I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned divine, and will prove a powerful preacher; and my desire is to prefer him that way, and in that way I will deny you nothing for him.'

After that time, as he professeth, 'the King descended to a persuasion, almost to a solicitation, of him to enter into sacred orders'; which, though he then denied not, yet he deferred it for almost three years. All which time he applied himself to an incessant study of textual divinity, and to the attainment of a greater perfection in the learned languages, Greek and Hebrew.

Presently after he entered into his holy profession, the King sent for him, and made him his chaplain in ordinary, and promised to take a particular care for his preferment.

That summer, in the very same month in which he entered into sacred orders, and was made the King's chaplain, his Majesty then going his progress, was entreated to receive an entertainment in the University of Cambridge; and Mr. Donne attending his Majesty at that time, his Majesty was pleased to recommend him to the University, to be made doctor in divinity. Dr. Harsnett, after Archbishop of York, was then Vice-Chancellor, who, knowing him to be the author of that learned book, *The Pseudo-Martyr*, required no other proof of his abilities, but proposed it to the University, who presently assented, and expressed a gladness that they had such an occasion to entitle him to be theirs.

Immediately after his return from Cambridge his wife died, leaving him a man of narrow, unsettled state, and—having buried five—the careful father of seven children then living, to whom he gave a voluntary assurance never to bring them under the subjection of a step-mother; which promise he kept most faithfully, burying with his tears all his earthly joys in his most dear and deserving wife's grave, and betook himself to a most retired and solitary life.

In this time of sadness he was importuned by the grave Benchers of Lincoln's Inn—who were once the companions and friends of his youth—to accept of their lecture, which, by reason of Dr. Gataker's removal from thence, was then void; of which he accepted, being most glad to renew his intermitted friendship with those whom he so much loved, and where he had been a Saul,—though not to persecute Christianity, or to deride it, yet in his irregular youth to neglect the visible practice of it,—there to become a Paul, and preach salvation to his beloved brethren.

The love of that noble society was expressed to him many ways; for, besides fair lodgings that were set apart, and newly furnished for him with all necessaries, other courtesies were also daily added; indeed so many, and so freely, as if they meant their gratitude should exceed his merits: and in this love-strife of desert and liberality, they continued for the space of two years, he preaching faithfully and constantly to them, and they liberally requiting him. About which time the Emperor of Germany died, and the Palsgrave, who had lately married the Lady Elizabeth, the king's only daughter, was elected and crowned King of Bohemia, the unhappy beginning of many miseries in that nation.

King James, whose motto—*Beati pacifici*—did truly speak the very thoughts of his heart, endeavoured first to prevent, and after to compose, the discords of that discomposed State: and, amongst other his endeavours, did then send the Lord Hay, Earl of Doncaster, his ambassador to those unsettled Princes; and, by a special command from his Majesty, Dr. Donne was appointed to assist and attend that employment to the princes of the union; for which the Earl was most glad, who had always put a great value on him, and taken a great pleasure in his conversation and discourse: and his friends at Lincoln's Inn were as glad, for they feared that his immoderate study and sadness for his wife's death would, as Jacob said, 'make his days few,' and, respecting his bodily health, 'evil' too; and of this there were many visible signs.

About fourteen months after his departure out of England, he returned to his friends of Lincoln's Inn, with his sorrows moderated, and his health improved; and there betook himself to his constant course of preaching.

About a year after his return out of Germany, Dr. Carey was made Bishop of Exeter, and by his removal the Deanery of St. Paul's being vacant, the King sent to Dr. Donne, and appointed him to attend him at dinner the next day. When his Majesty was sat down, before he had eat any meat, he said after his pleasant manner, 'Dr. Donne, I have invited you to dinner; and, though you sit not down with me, yet I will carve to you of a dish that I know you love well; for, knowing you love London, I do therefore make you Dean of St. Paul's; and, when I have dined, then do you take your beloved dish home to your study, say grace there to yourself, and much good may it do you.'

He was made dean in the fiftieth year of his age; and in his fifty-fourth year a dangerous sickness seized him, which inclined him to a consumption: but God, as Job thankfully acknowledged, preserved his spirit, and kept his intellectuals as clear and perfect as when that sickness first seized his body; but it continued long, and threatened him with death, which he dreaded not.

This sickness brought him so near to the gates of death, and he saw the grave so ready to devour him, that he would often say his recovery was supernatural: but that God that then restored his health continued it to him till the fifty-ninth year of his life; and

then, in August 1630, being with his eldest daughter, Mrs. Harvey, at Abury Hatch, in Essex, he there fell into a fever, which, with the help of his constant infirmity—vapours from the spleen—hastened him into so visible a consumption, that his beholders might say, as St. Paul of himself, 'He dies daily'; and he might say with Job, 'My welfare passeth away as a cloud, the days of my affliction have taken hold of me, and weary nights are appointed for me.'

His marriage was the remarkable error of his life—an error which, though he had a wit able and very apt to maintain paradoxes, yet he was very far from justifying it; and though his wife's competent years, and other reasons, might be justly urged to moderate severe censures, yet he would occasionally condemn himself for it; and doubtless it had been attended with an heavy repentance, if God had not blessed them with so mutual and cordial affections, as in the midst of their sufferings made their bread of sorrow taste more pleasantly than the banquets of dull and low-spirited people.

Before I proceed further, I think fit to inform the reader, that not long before his death he caused to be drawn a figure of the body of Christ extended upon an anchor, like those which painters draw when they would present us with the picture of Christ crucified on the cross: his varying no otherwise, than to affix him not to a cross, but to an anchor—the emblem of hope;—this he caused to be drawn in little, and then many of those figures thus drawn to be engraven very small in Heliotropium stones, and set in gold; and of these he sent to many of his dearest friends, to be used as seals, or rings, and kept as memorials of him, and of his affection to them.

The latter part of his life may be said to be a continued study; for as he usually preached once a week, if not oftener, so after his sermon he never gave his eyes rest, till he had chosen out a new text, and that night cast his sermon into a form, and his text into divisions; and the next day betook himself to consult the fathers, and so commit his meditations to his memory, which was excellent. But upon Saturday he usually gave himself and his mind a rest from the weary burthen of his week's meditations, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends, or some other diversions of his thoughts; and would say, 'that he gave both his body and mind that refreshment, that he might be enabled to do the work of the day following, not faintly, but with courage and cheerfulness.'

Nor was his age only so industrious, but in the most unsettled days of his youth his bed was not able to detain him beyond the hour of four in the morning; and it was no common business that drew him out of his chamber till past ten; all which time was employed in study; though he took great liberty after it. And if this seem strange, it may gain a belief by the visible fruits of his labours; some of which remain as testimonies of what is here written: for he left the resultance of 1400 authors, most of them abridged and analysed with his own hand; he left also six score of his sermons, all written with his own hand; also an exact and laborious treatise concerning self-murder, called Biathanatos; wherein all the laws violated by that act are diligently surveyed, and judiciously censured: a treatise written in his younger days, which alone might declare him then not only perfect in the civil and canon law, but in many other such studies and arguments as enter not into the consideration of many that labour to be thought great clerks, and pretend to know all things.

We left the author sick in Essex, where he was forced to spend much of that winter, by reason of his disability to remove from that place.

[At his first return out of Essex] Dr. Donne, by the persuasion of Dr. Fox, easily yielded at this very time to have a monument made for him; but Dr. Fox undertook not to persuade him how, or what monument it should be; that was left to Dr. Donne himself.

A monument being resolved upon, Dr. Donne sent for a Carver to make for him in wood the figure of an urn, giving him directions for the compass and height of it; and to bring with it a board, of the just height of his body. 'These being got, then without delay 'a choice painter was got to be in readiness to draw his picture, which 'was taken as followeth.—Several charcoal fires being first made in 'his large study, he brought with him into that place his winding-'sheet in his hand, and having put off all his clothes, had this sheet 'put on him, and so tied with knots at his head and feet, and his hands 'so placed as dead bodies are usually fitted, to be shrouded and put 'into their coffin, or grave. Upon this urn he thus stood, with his 'eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might 'show his lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned 'towards the east, from whence he expected the second coming of

'his and our Saviour Jesus.' In this posture he was drawn at his just height; and when the picture was fully finished, he caused it to be set by his bed-side, where it continued and became his hourly object till his death, and was then given to his dearest friend and executor Dr. Henry King, then chief residentiary of St. Paul's, who caused him to be thus carved in one entire piece of white marble, as it now stands in that church.

Upon Monday, after the drawing this picture, he took his last leave of his beloved study; and, being sensible of his hourly decay, retired himself to his bed-chamber; and that week sent at several times for many of his most considerable friends, with whom he took a solemn and deliberate farewell, commending to their considerations some sentences useful for the regulation of their lives; and then dismissed them, as good Jacob did his sons, with a spiritual benediction.

He lay fifteen days earnestly expecting his hourly change; and in the last hour of his last day, as his body melted away, and vapoured into spirit, his soul having, I verily believe, some revelation of the beatifical vision, he said, 'I were miserable if I might not die'; and after those words, closed many periods of his faint breath by saying often, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.' His speech, which had long been his ready and faithful servant, left him not till the last minute of his life, and then forsook him, not to serve another master—for who speaks like him,—but died before him; for that it was then become useless to him, that now conversed with God on earth, as angels are said to do in heaven, only by thoughts and looks. Being speechless, and seeing heaven by that illumination by which he saw it, he did, as St. Stephen, 'look steadfastly into it, till he saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God his Father'; and being satisfied with this blessed sight, as his soul ascended, and his last breath departed from him, he closed his own eyes, and then disposed his hands and body into such a posture as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him.

Thus variable, thus virtuous was the life: thus excellent, thus exemplary was the death of this memorable man.

I. W.

Feb. 15, 1639.

¶ THE GOOD-MORROW

I WONDER, *by my troth, what thou and I*
Did, till we loved? were we not weaned till then?
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be;
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room an everywhere.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;
If our two loves be one, or thou and I
Love so alike that none can slacken, none can die.

¶ AIR AND ANGELS

TWICE *or thrice had I loved thee,*
Before I knew thy face or name;
So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame,
Angels affect us oft, and worshipped be.
Still when, to where thou wert, I came,
Some lovely glorious nothing did I see.
But since my soul, whose child love is,
Takes limbs of flesh, and else could nothing do,
More subtle than the parent is
Love must not be, but take a body too;
And therefore what thou wert, and who,
I bid love ask, and now
That it assume thy body, I allow,
And fix itself in thy lips, eyes, and brow.

Whilst thus to ballast love I thought,
And so more steadily to have gone,
With wares which would sink admiration,
I saw I had love's pinnace overfraught;
Every thy hair for love to work upon
Is much too much; some fitter must be sought;
For, nor in nothing, nor in things
Extreme, and scattering bright, can love inhere;
Then as an angel face and wings
Of air, not pure as it, yet pure doth wear,
So thy love may be my love's sphere;
Just such disparity
As is 'twixt air and angels' purity,
'Twixt women's love, and men's, will ever be.

¶ THE ECSTASY

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant bank swelled up, to rest
The violet's reclining head,
Sat we two, one another's best.

Our hands were firmly cemented
By a fast balm, which thence did spring;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string.

So to engraft our hands, as yet
Was all the means to make us one;
And pictures in our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.

As, 'twixt two equal armies, Fate
Suspends uncertain victory,
Our souls—which to advance their state,
Were gone out—hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay;
All day, the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day.

If any, so by love refined,
That he soul's language understood,
And by good love were grown all mind,
Within convenient distance stood,

He—though he knew not which soul spake,
Because both meant, both spake the same—
Might thence a new concoction take,
And part far purer than he came.

This ecstasy doth unperplex
(We said) and tell us what we love;
We see by this, it was not sex;
We see we saw not what did move:

But as all several souls contain
Mixture of things they know not what,
Love these mixed souls doth mix again,
And makes both one, each this and that.

A single violet transplant,
The strength, the colour, and the size—
All which before was poor and scant—
Redoubles still, and multiplies.

When love with one another so
Interinanimates two souls,
That abler soul, which thence doth flow,
Defects of loneliness controls.

We then, who are this new soul, know
Of what we are composed and made,
For the atomies of which we grow
Are souls, whom no change can invade.

But, O alas! so long, so far,
Our bodies why do we forbear?
They're ours, though they're not we; we are
The intelligences, they the spheres.

We owe them thanks, because they thus
Did us, to us, at first convey,
Yielded their forces, sense, to us,
Nor are dross to us, but allay.

On man heaven's influence works not so,
But that it first imprints the air;
So soul into the soul may flow,
Though it to body first repair.

As our blood labours to beget
Spirits, as like souls as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtle knot, which makes us man:

So must pure lovers' souls descend
To affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great prince in prison lies.

To our bodies turn we then, that so
Weak men on love revealed may look;
Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
But yet the body is his book.

And if some lover, such as we,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still mark us, he shall see
Small change when we're to bodies gone.

¶ LOVE'S INFINITENESS

If yet I have not all thy love,
Dear, I shall never have it all;
I cannot breathe one other sigh, to move,
Nor can intreat one other tear to fall;
And all my treasure, which should purchase thee,
Sighs, tears, and oaths, and letters I have spent;
Yet no more can be due to me,
Than at the bargain made was meant.
If then thy gift of love were partial,
That some to me, some should to others fall,
Dear, I shall never have thee all.

Or if then thou gavest me all,
All was but all which thou hadst then;
But if in thy heart, since, there be or shall
New love created be by other men,
Which have their stocks entire, and can in tears,
In sighs, in oaths, and letters, outbid me,
This new love may beget new fears,
For this love was not vowed by thee.
And yet it was, thy gift being general;
The ground, thy heart, is mine; what ever shall
Grow there, dear, I should have it all.

Yet I would not have all yet.
He that hath all can have no more;
And since my love doth every day admit
New growth, thou shouldst have new rewards in store;
Thou canst not every day give me thy heart,
If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it;
Love's riddles are, that though thy heart depart,
It stays at home, and thou with losing savest it;
But we will have a way more liberal
Than changing hearts, to join them; so we shall
Be one, and one another's all.

¶ THE BROKEN HEART

He is stark mad, whoever says,
That he hath been in love an hour,
Yet not that love so soon decays,
But that it can ten in less space devour;
Who will believe me, if I swear
That I have had the plague a year?
Who would not laugh at me, if I should say
I saw a flash of powder burn a day?

Ah, what a trifle is a heart,
If once into love's hands it come!
All other griefs allow a part
To other griefs, and ask themselves but some;
They come to us, but us love draws;
He swallows us and never chaws;
By him, as by chained shot, whole ranks do die;
He is the tyrant pike, our hearts the fry.

If 'twere not so, what did become
Of my heart when I first saw thee?
I brought a heart into the room,
But from the room I carried none with me.
If it had gone to thee, I know
Mine would have taught thine heart to show
More pity unto me; but Love, alas!
At one first blow did shiver it as glass.

Yet nothing can to nothing fall,
Nor any place be empty quite;
Therefore I think my breast hath all
Those pieces still, though they be not unite;
And now, as broken glasses show
A hundred lesser faces, so
My rags of heart can like, wish, and adore,
But after one such love, can love no more.

¶ LOVE'S GROWTH

I SCARCE *believe my love to be so pure*
As I had thought it was,
Because it doth endure
Vicissitude, and season, as the grass;
Methinks I lied all winter, when I swore
My love was infinite, if spring make it more.

But if this medicine, love, which cures all sorrow
With more, not only be no quintessence,
But mixed of all stuffs, vexing soul, or sense,
And of the sun his active vigour borrow,
Love's not so pure and abstract as they use
To say, which have no mistress but their Muse;
But as all else, being elemented too,
Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.

And yet no greater, but more eminent,
Love by the spring is grown;
As in the firmament
Stars by the sun are not enlarged, but shown,
Gentle love deeds, as blossoms on a bough,
From love's awakened root do bud out now.

If, as in water stirred more circles be
Produced by one, love such additions take,
Those like so many spheres but one heaven make,
For they are all concentric unto thee;
And though each spring do add to love new heat,
As princes do in times of action get
New taxes, and remit them not in peace,
No winter shall abate this spring's increase.

¶ THE PARADOX

No lover saith, I love, nor any other
Can judge a perfect lover;
He thinks that else none can or will agree,
That any loves but he;
I cannot say I loved, for who can say
He was killed yesterday.
Love with excess of heat, more young than old,
Death kills with too much cold;
We die but once, and who loved last did die,
He that saith, twice, doth lie;
For though he seem to move, and stir a while,
It doth the sense beguile.
Such life is like the light which bideth yet
When the light's life is set,
Or like the heat which fire in solid matter
Leaves behind, two hours after.
Once I loved and died; and am now become
Mine epitaph and tomb;
Here dead men speak their last, and so do I;
Love-slain, lo! here I die.

¶ A LECTURE UPON THE SHADOW

Stand still, and I will read to thee
A lecture, Love, in love's philosophy.
These three hours that we have spent,
Walking here, two shadows went
Along with us, which we ourselves produced.
But, now the sun is just above our head,
We do those shadows tread,
And to brave clearness all things are reduced.
So whilst our infant loves did grow,
Disguises did, and shadows, flow,
From us and our cares; but now 'tis not so.

That love hath not attained the highest degree,
Which is still diligent lest others see.

Except our loves at this noon stay,
We shall new shadows make the other way.
As the first were made to blind
Others, these which come behind
Will work upon ourselves, and blind our eyes.
If our loves faint, and westwardly decline,
To me thou, falsely, thine
And I to thee mine actions shall disguise.
The morning shadows wear away,
But these grow longer all the day;
But oh! love's day is short, if love decay.

Love is a growing, or full constant light,
And his first minute, after noon, is night.

¶ ELEGY: THE AUTUMNAL

No spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace
As I have seen in one autumnal face;
Young beauties force our love, and that's a rape;
This doth but counsel, yet you cannot 'scape.
If 'twere a shame to love, here 'twere no shame;
Affection here takes reverence's name.
Were her first years the Golden Age? that's true,
But now they're gold oft tried, and ever new.
That was her torrid and inflaming time;
This is her tolerable, tropic clime.
Fair eyes; who asks more heat than comes from hence,
He in a fever wishes pestilence.
Call not these wrinkles, graves; if graves they were,
They were Love's graves, for else he is nowhere.
Yet lies not Love dead here, but here doth sit,
Vowed to this trench, like an anachorite,
And here, till hers, which must be his death, come,
He doth not dig a grave, but build a tomb.
Here dwells he; though he sojourn everywhere
In progress, yet his standing house is here;
Here, where still evening is, not noon, nor night;
Where no voluptuousness, yet all delight.
In all her words, unto all hearers fit,
You may at revels, you at council, sit.
This is Love's timber; youth his underwood;
There he, as wine in June, enrages blood;
Which then comes seasonablest, when our taste
And appetite to other things is past.
Xerxes' strange Lydian love, the platane tree,
Was loved for age, none being so large as she;
Or else because, being young, nature did bless
Her youth with age's glory, barrenness.

If we love things long sought, age is a thing
Which we are fifty years in compassing;
If transitory things, which soon decay,
Age must be loveliest at the latest day.
But name not winter faces, whose skin's slack,
Lank as an unthrift's purse, but a soul's sack;
Whose eyes seek light within, for all here's shade;
Whose mouths are holes, rather worn out, than made;
Whose every tooth to a several place is gone,
To vex their souls at resurrection;
Name not these living death-heads unto me,
For these, not ancient, but antique, be.
I hate extremes; yet I had rather stay
With tombs than cradles, to wear out a day.
Since such love's motion natural is, may still
My love descend, and journey down the hill,
Not panting after growing beauties; so
I shall ebb out with them who homeward go.

¶ THE ANNIVERSARY

All kings, and all their favourites,
All glory of honours, beauties, wits,
The sun itself, which makes times as they pass,
Is elder by a year now than it was
When thou and I first one another saw.
All other things to their destruction draw,
Only our love hath no decay;
This no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday;
Running it never runs from us away,
But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.

Two graves must hide thine and my corse;
If one might, death were no divorce.
Alas! as well as other princes, we
—Who prince enough in one another be—
Must leave at last in death these eyes and ears,
Oft fed with true oaths and with sweet salt tears;
But souls where nothing dwells but love
—All other thoughts being inmates—then shall prove
This or a love increased there above,
When bodies to their graves, souls from their graves remove.

And then we shall be throughly blest;
But now no more than all the rest.
Here upon earth we're kings, and none but we
Can be such kings, nor of such subjects be.
Who is so safe as we? where none can do
Treason to us, except one of us two.
True and false fears let us refrain,
Let us love nobly, and live, and add again
Years and years unto years, till we attain
To write threescore; this is the second of our reign.

¶ THE BAIT

COME *live with me, and be my love,*
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands, and crystal brooks,
With silken lines and silver hooks.

There will the river whispering run
Warmed by thy eyes, more than the sun;
And there the enamoured fish will stay,
Begging themselves they may betray.

When thou wilt swim in that live bath,
Each fish, which every channel hath,
Will amorously to thee swim,
Gladder to catch thee, than thou him.

If thou, to be so seen, be'st loth,
By sun or moon, thou darkenest both,
And if myself have leave to see,
I need not their light, having thee.

Let others freeze with angling reeds,
And cut their legs with shells and weeds,
Or treacherously poor fish beset,
With strangling snare, or windowy net.

Let coarse bold hands from slimy nest
The bedded fish in banks out-wrest;
Or curious traitors, sleeve-silk flies,
Bewitch poor fishes' wandering eyes.

For thee, thou need'st no such deceit,
For thou thyself art thine own bait:
That fish, that is not catched thereby,
Alas! is wiser far than I.

¶ THE DAMP

When I am dead, and doctors know not why,
And my friends' curiosity
Will have me cut up to survey each part,
When they shall find your picture in my heart,
You think a sudden damp of love
Will through all their senses move,
And work on them as me, and so prefer
Your murder to the name of massacre,

Poor victories! But if you dare be brave,
And pleasure in your conquest have,
First kill the enormous giant, your Disdain;
And let the enchantress Honour next be slain;
And like a Goth or Vandal rise,
Deface records and histories
Of your own arts and triumphs over men,
And without such advantage kill me then,

For I could muster up, as well as you,
My giants, and my witches too,
Which are vast Constancy and Secretness;
But these I neither look for nor profess;
Kill me as woman, let me die
As a mere man; do you but try
Your passive valour, and you shall find then,
Naked you've odds enough of any man.

¶ THE FLEA

MARK *but this flea, and mark in this,*
How little that which thou deniest me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be.
Thou knowest that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead;
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two;
And this, alas! is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea, more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is.
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and sayest that thou
Find'st not thyself nor me the weaker now.
'Tis true; then learn how false fears be;
Just so much honour, when thou yieldest to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

¶ ELEGY: TO HIS MISTRESS GOING TO BED

COME, *madam, come, all rest my powers defy;*
Until I labour, I in labour lie.
The foe oftimes, having the foe in sight,
Is tired with standing, though he never fight.
Off with that girdle, like heaven's zone glittering,
But a far fairer world encompassing.
Unpin that spangled breast-plate, which you wear,
That the eyes of busy fools may be stopped there.
Unlace yourself, for that harmonious chime
Tells me from you that now it is bed-time.
Off with that happy busk, which I envy,
That still can be, and still can stand so nigh.
Your gown going off such beauteous state reveals,
As when from flowery meads the hill's shadow steals.
Off with that wiry coronet, and show
The hairy diadem which on you doth grow.
Off with your hose and shoes; then softly tread
In this love's hallowed temple, this soft bed.
In such white robes heaven's angels used to be
Revealed to men; thou, angel, bring'st with thee
A heaven like Mahomet's paradise; and though
Ill spirits walk in white, we easily know
By this these angels from an evil sprite;
Those set our hairs, but these our flesh upright.
Licence my roving hands, and let them go
Before, behind, between, above, below.
O my America! my new-found-land,
My kingdom, safeliest when with one man manned,
My mine of precious stones, my empery;
How am I blest in thus discovering thee!
To enter in these bonds, is to be free;
Then, where my hand is set, my seal shall be.

Full nakedness! All joys are due to thee;
As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must be
To taste whole joys. Gems which you women use
Are like Atlanta's ball cast in men's views;
That, when a fool's eye lighteth on a gem,
His earthly soul may covet theirs, not them.
Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
For laymen, are all women thus arrayed.
Themselves are mystic books, which only we
—Whom their imputed grace will dignify—
Must see revealed. Then, since that I may know,
As liberally as to a midwife show
Thyself; cast all, yea, this white linen hence;
There is no penance due to innocence:
To teach thee, I am naked first; why then,
What need'st thou have more covering than a man?

ELEGY: THE COMPARISON

As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,
As that which from chafed muscat's pores doth trill;
As the almighty balm of the early east,
Such are the sweat drops of my mistress' breast;
And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,
They seem no sweat drops, but pearl carcanets.
Rank sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles,
Like spermatic issue of ripe menstruous boils,
Or like the scum, which, by need's lawless law
Enforced, Sanserra's starved men did draw
From parboiled shoes and boots, and all the rest
Which were with any sovereign fatness blest;
And like vile stones lying in saffroned tin,
Or warts, or wheals, it hangs upon her skin.
Round as the world's her head, on every side,
Like to the fatal ball which fell on Ide;
Or that whereof God had such jealousy,
As, for the ravishing thereof we die.
Thy head is like a rough-hewn statue of jet,
Where marks for eyes, nose, mouth, are yet scarce set;
Like the first chaos, or flat seeming face
Of Cynthia, when the earth's shadows her embrace.
Like Proserpine's white beauty-keeping chest,
Or Jove's best fortune's urn, is her fair breast.
Thine's like worm-eaten trunks, clothed in seal's skin,
Or grave, that's dust without, and stink within.
And like that slender stalk, at whose end stands
The woodbine quivering, are her arms and hands.
Like rough-barked elm-boughs, or the russet skin
Of men late scourged for madness, or for sin,
Like sun-parched quarters on the city gate,
Such is thy tanned skin's lamentable state;

And like a bunch of rag ged carrots stand
The short swollen fingers of thy gouty hand.
Then like the chemic's masculine, equal fire,
Which in the limbec's warm womb doth inspire
Into the earth's worthless dirt a soul of gold,
Such cherishing heat her best loved part doth hold.
Thine's like the dread mouth of a fired gun,
Or like hot liquid metals newly run
Into clay moulds, or like to that Ætna,
Where round about the grass is burnt away.
Are not your kisses then as filthy, and more,
As a worm sucking an envenomed sore?
Doth not thy fearful hand in feeling quake,
As one which, gathering flowers, still fears a snake?
Is not your last act harsh and violent,
As when a plough a stony ground doth rent?
So kiss good turtles, so devoutly nice
Are priests in handling reverent sacrifice,
And such in searching wounds the surgeon is,
As we, when we embrace, or touch, or kiss.
Leave her, and I will leave comparing thus,
She and comparisons are odious.

¶ THE DREAM

Dear love, for nothing less than thee
Would I have broke this happy dream;
It was a theme
For reason, much too strong for fantasy.
Therefore thou waked'st me wisely; yet
My dream thou brok'st not, but continued'st it.
Thou art so true that thoughts of thee suffice
To make dreams truths, and fables histories;
Enter these arms, for since thou thought'st it best,
Not to dream all my dream, let's act the rest.

As lightning, or a taper's light,
Thine eyes, and not thy noise waked me;
Yet I thought thee
—For thou lov'st truth—an angel, at first sight;
But when I saw thou saw'st my heart,
And knew'st my thoughts beyond an angel's art,
When thou knew'st what I dreamt, when thou knew'st
when
Excess of joy would wake me, and cam'st then,
I must confess, it could not choose but be
Profane, to think thee any thing but thee.

Coming and staying showed thee, thee,
But rising makes me doubt, that now
Thou art not thou.
That love is weak where fear's as strong as he;
'Tis not all spirit, pure and brave,
If mixture it of fear, shame, honour have;
Perchance as torches, which must ready be,
Men light and put out, so thou deal'st with me;
Thou cam'st to kindle, go'st to come; then I
Will dream that hope again, but else would die.

¶ ELEGY: THE DREAM

IMAGE *of her whom I love, more than she,*
Whose fair impression in my faithful heart
Makes me her medal, and makes her love me,
As kings do coins, to which their stamps impart
The value; go, and take my heart from hence,
Which now is grown too great and good for me.
Honours oppress weak spirits, and our sense
Strong objects dull; the more, the less we see.
When you are gone, and reason gone with you,
Then fantasy is queen and soul, and all;
She can present joys meaner than you do,
Convenient and more proportional.
So, if I dream I have you, I have you,
For all our joys are but fantastical;
And so I 'scape the pain, for pain is true;
And sleep, which locks up sense, doth lock out all.
After a such fruition I shall wake,
And, but the waking, nothing shall repent;
And shall to love more thankful sonnets make,
Than if more honour, tears, and pains were spent.
But, dearest heart and dearer image, stay;
Alas! true joys at best are dream enough;
Though you stay here, you pass too fast away,
For even at first life's taper is a snuff.
Filled with her love, may I be rather grown
Mad with much heart, than idiot with none.

¶ BREAK OF DAY

'Tis true, 'tis day; what though it be?
Oh, wilt thou therefore rise from me?
Why should we rise because 'tis light?
Did we lie down because 'twas night?
Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,
Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;
If it could speak as well as spy,
This were the worst that it could say,
That being well I fain would stay,
And that I loved my heart and honour so,
That I would not from him, that had them, go.

Must business thee from hence remove?
Oh, that's the worst disease of love,
The poor, the foul, the false, love can
Admit, but not the busied man.
He which hath business, and makes love, doth do
Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.

¶ THE SUN RISING

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school-boys and sour prentices,
Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long.
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and to-morrow late tell me,
Whether both the Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear, "All here in one bed lay."

She's all states, and all princes I;
Nothing else is;
Princes do but play us; compared to this,
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere.

¶ THE CANONIZATION

For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five grey hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his Honour, or his Grace,
Or the king's real, or his stamped face
Contemplate, what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Alas! alas! who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
Call her one, me another fly,
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find the eagle and the dove.
The phœnix riddle hath more wit
By us: we two, being one, are it.
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit,
We die and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tombs and hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;
As well a well-wrought urn becomes
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
And by these hymns all shall approve
Us canonized for love;

And thus invoke us, "You, whom reverend love
Made one another's hermitage;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes;
So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize—
Countries, towns, courts beg from above
A pattern of your love."

¶ A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
"The breath goes now," and some say, "No."

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of the earth brings harms and fears;
Men reckon what it did and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love
—Whose soul is sense—cannot admit
Absense, because it doth remove
The thing which elemented it.

But we, by a love so much refined,
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less eyes, lips and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet, when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like the other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

¶ SONG

SWEETEST *love, I do not go,*
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;
But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best,
To use myself in jest
Thus by feigned deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way;
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

Oh, how feeble is man's power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall;
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sighest, thou sighest not wind,
But sighest my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.

It cannot be
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill;
Destiny may take thy part,
And may thy fears fulfil.
But think that we
Are but turned aside to sleep.
They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

ELEGY ON HIS MISTRESS

By our first strange and fatal interview,
By all desires which thereof did ensue,
By our long starving hopes, by that remorse
Which my words' masculine persuasive force
Begot in thee, and by the memory
Of hurts, which spies and rivals threatened me,
I calmly beg. But by thy father's wrath,
By all pains, which want and divorcement hath,
I conjure thee, and all the oaths which I
And thou have sworn to seal joint constancy,
Here I unswear, and overswear them thus;
Thou shalt not love by ways so dangerous.
Temper, O fair love, love's impetuous rage;
Be my true mistress still, not my feigned page.
I'll go, and, by thy kind leave, leave behind
Thee, only worthy to nurse in my mind
Thirst to come back; oh! if thou die before,
My soul from other lands to thee shall soar.
Thy, else almighty, beauty cannot move
Rage from the seas, nor thy love teach them love,
Nor tame wild Boreas' harshness; thou hast read
How roughly he in pieces shivered
Fair Orithea, whom he swore he loved.
Fall ill or good, 'tis madness to have proved
Dangers unurged; feed on this flattery,
That absent lovers one in the other be.
Dissemble nothing, not a boy, nor change
Thy body's habit, nor mind's; be not strange
To thyself only. All will spy in thy face
A blushing womanly discovering grace.
Richly clothed apes are called apes, and as soon
Eclipsed as bright, we call the moon the moon.

Men of France, changeable chameleons,
Spitals of diseases, shops of fashions,
Love's fuellers, and the rightest company
Of players, which upon the world's stage be,
Will quickly know thee, and no less, alas!
The indifferent Italian, as we pass
His warm land, well content to think thee page,
Will hunt thee with such lust, and hideous rage,
As Lot's fair guests were vexed. But none of these,
Nor spongy hydroptic Dutch shall thee displease,
If thou stay here. Oh! stay here, for, for thee
England is only a worthy gallery,
To walk in expectation, till from thence
Our greatest king call thee to his presence.
When I am gone, dream me some happiness;
Nor let thy looks our long-hid love confess;
Nor praise, nor dispraise me, nor bless nor curse
Openly love's force, nor in bed fright thy nurse
With midnight's startings, crying out, oh, oh!
Nurse, oh! my love is slain; I saw him go
O'er the white Alps alone; I saw him, I,
Assailed, fight, taken, stabbed, bleed, fall, and die.
Augur me better chance, except dread Jove
Think it enough for me to have had thy love.

¶ ELEGY: HIS PICTURE

HERE take my picture; though I bid farewell,
Thine, in my heart, where my soul dwells, shall dwell.
'Tis like me now; but I dead, 'twill be more,
When we are shadows both, than 'twas before.
When weatherbeaten I come back; my hand
Perhaps with rude oars torn, or sun-beams tann'd,
My face and breast of haircloth, and my head
With care's rash sudden storms being o'erspread,
My body a sack of bones, broken within,
And powder's blue stains scattered on my skin;
If rival fools tax thee to have loved a man,
So foul and coarse, as, oh! I may seem then,
This shall say what I was; and thou shalt say,
"Do his hurts reach me? doth my worth decay?
Or do they reach his judging mind, that he
Should now love less, what he did love to see?
That which in him was fair and delicate,
Was but the milk, which in love's childish state
Did nurse it; who now is grown strong enough
To feed on that, which to weak tastes seems tough."

¶ A VALEDICTION OF MY NAME, IN THE WINDOW

My name engraved herein
Doth contribute my firmness to this glass,
Which ever since that charm hath been
As hard, as that which graved it was;
Thine eye will give it price enough, to mock
The diamonds of either rock.

'Tis much that glass should be
As all-confessing and through-shine as I;
'Tis more that it shows thee to thee,
And clear reflects thee to thine eye.
But all such rules love's magic can undo;
Here you see me, and I am you.

As no one point, nor dash,
Which are but accessories to this name,
The showers and tempests can outwash:
So shall all times find me the same;
You this entireness better may fulfill,
Who have the pattern with you still.

Or if too hard and deep
This learning be, for a scratched name to teach,
It as a given death's head keep,
Lovers' mortality to preach;
Or think this ragged bony name to be
My ruinous anatomy.

Then, as all my souls be
Emparadised in you—in whom alone
I understand, and grow, and see—
The rafters of my body, bone,
Being still with you, the muscle, sinew, and vein
Which tile this house, will come again.

Till my return repair
And recompact my scattered body so,
As all the virtuous powers which are
Fixed in the stars are said to flow
Into such characters as graved be
When these stars have supremacy.

So since this name was cut,
When love and grief their exaltation had,
No door 'gainst this name's influence shut.
As much more loving, as more sad,
'Twill make thee; and thou shouldst, till I return,
Since I die daily, daily mourn.

When thy inconsiderate hand
Flings ope this casement, with my trembling name,
To look on one, whose wit or land
New battery to thy heart may frame,
Then think this name alive, and that thou thus
In it offend'st my Genius.

And when thy melted maid,
Corrupted by thy lover's gold and page,
His letter at thy pillow hath laid,
Disputed it, and tamed thy rage,
And thou begin'st to thaw towards him, for this,
May my name step in, and hide his.

And if this treason go
To an overt act and that thou write again,
In superscribing, this name flow
Into thy fancy from the pane;
So, in forgetting thou rememberest right,
And unaware to me shalt write.

But glass and lines must be
No means our firm substantial love to keep;
Near death inflicts this lethargy,
And this I murmur in my sleep;
Impute this idle talk, to that I go,
For dying men talk often so.

¶ ELEGY: HIS PARTING FROM HER

SINCE she must go, and I must mourn, come night,
Environ me with darkness, whilst I write;
Shadow that hell unto me, which alone
I am to suffer when my love is gone.
Alas! the darkest magic cannot do it,
Thou and great hell, to boot, are shadows to it.
Should Cynthia quit thee, Venus, and each star,
It would not form one thought dark as mine are.
I could lend them obscureness now, and say
Out of myself, there should be no more day.
Such is already my self-want of sight,
Did not the fire within me force a light.
O Love, that fire and darkness should be mixed,
Or to thy triumphs such strange torments fixed!
Is't because thou thyself art blind, that we,
Thy martyrs, must no more each other see?
Or takest thou pride to break us on thy wheel,
And view old Chaos in the pains we feel?
Or have we left undone some mutual right,
That thus with parting thou seekest us to spite?
No, no. The fault is mine, impute it to me,
Or rather to conspiring destiny,
Which, since I loved for form before, decreed
That I should suffer, when I loved indeed;
And therefore now, sooner than I can say,
I saw the golden fruit, 'tis rapt away;
Or as I had watched one drop in the vast stream,
And I left wealthy only in a dream.
Yet, Love, thou art blinder than myself in this,
To vex my dove-like friend for my amiss;
And where my own sad truth may expiate
Thy wrath, to make her fortune run my fate.

So blinded justice doth, when favourites fall,
Strike them, their house, their friends, their followers all.
Was't not enough that thou didst dart thy fires
Into our bloods, inflaming our desires,
And madest us sigh, and blow, and pant, and burn,
And then thyself into our flame didst turn?
Was't not enough that thou didst hazard us
To paths in love so dark and dangerous,
And those so ambushed round with household spies,
And over all thy husband's towering eyes,
Inflamed with the ugly sweat of jealousy;
Yet went we not still on in constancy?
Have we for this kept guards, like spy on spy?
Had correspondence whilst the foe stood by?
Stolen, more to sweeten them, our many blisses
Of meetings, conference, embracements, kisses?
Shadowed with negligence our best respects?
Varied our language through all dialects
Of becks, winks, looks, and often under boards
Spoke dialogues with our feet far from our words?
Have we proved all the secrets of our art,
Yea, thy pale inwards, and thy panting heart?
And, after all this passed purgatory,
Must sad divorce make us the vulgar story?
First let our eyes be riveted quite through
Our turning brain, and both our lips grow to;
Let our arms clasp like ivy, and our fear
Freeze us together, that we may stick here,
Till Fortune, that would rive us with the deed,
Strain her eyes open, and it make them bleed.
For Love it cannot be, whom hitherto
I have accused, should such a mischief do.

O Fortune, thou art not worth my least exclaim,
And plague enough thou hast in thy own shame.
Do thy great worst; my friend and I have arms,
Though not against thy strokes, against thy harms.
Rend us in sunder; thou canst not divide
Our bodies so, but that our souls are tied,
And we can love by letters still and gifts,
And thoughts and dreams; love never wanteth shifts.
I will not look upon the quickening sun,
But straight her beauty to my sense shall run;
The air shall note her soft, the fire, most pure;
Water suggest her clear, and the earth sure.
Time shall not lose our passages; the spring,
How fresh our love was in the beginning;
The summer, how it ripened in the year;
And autumn, what our golden harvests were;
The winter I'll not think on to spite thee,
But count it a lost season; so shall she.
And dearest friend, since we must part, drown night
With hope of day—burdens well borne are light.
The cold and darkness longer hang somewhere,
Yet Phœbus equally lights all the sphere;
And what he cannot in like portions pay
The world enjoys in mass, and so we may.
Be then ever yourself, and let no woe
Win on your health, your youth, your beauty; so
Declare yourself base Fortune's enemy,
No less be your contempt than her inconstancy;
That I may grow enamoured on your mind,
When mine own thoughts I here neglected find.
And this to the comfort of my dear I vow,
My deeds shall still be what my deeds are now;

The poles shall move to teach me ere I start;
And when I change my love, I'll change my heart.
Nay, if I wax but cold in my desire,
Think, heaven hath motion lost, and the world, fire.
Much more I could, but many words have made
That oft suspected which men most persuade.
Take therefore all in this; I love so true,
As I will never look for less in you.

¶ THE LEGACY

When last I died, and, dear, I die
As often as from thee I go,
Though it be but an hour ago
(And lovers' hours be full eternity)
I can remember yet, that I
Something did say, and something did bestow;
Though I be dead, which sent me, I might be
Mine own executor, and legacy.

I heard me say, 'Tell her anon,
That myself' (that is you, not I)
'Did kill me,' and when I felt me die,
I bid me send my heart, when I was gone;
But I alas! could there find none;
When I had ripped me, and searched where hearts should
lie,
It killed me again, that I who still was true
In life, in my last will should cozen you.

Yet I found something like a heart,
But colours it, and corners, had;
It was not good, it was not bad,
It was entire to none, and few had part;
As good as could be made by art
It seemed, and therefore for our losses sad.
I meant to send that heart instead of mine,
But O! no man could hold it, for 'twas thine.

¶ THE COMPUTATION

FOR *my first twenty years, since yesterday,*
I scarce believed thou couldst be gone away;
For forty more I fed on favours past,
And forty on hopes, that thou wouldst they might last;
Tears drowned one hundred and sighs blew out two;
A thousand, I did neither think, nor do,
Or not divide, all being one thought of you;
Or in a thousand more, forgot that too.
Yet call not this long life; but think that I
Am, by being dead, immortal; can ghosts die?

¶ THE EXPIRATION

So, so, break off this last lamenting kiss,
Which sucks two souls, and vapours both away;
Turn, thou ghost, that way, and let me turn this,
And let ourselves benight our happiest day.
We ask none leave to love; nor will we owe
Any, so cheap a death as saying, "Go."

Go; and if that word have not quite killed thee,
Ease me with death, by bidding me go too.
Or, if it have, let my word work on me,
And a just office on a murderer do;
Except it be too late to kill me so
Being double dead, going, and bidding, "Go."

¶ A VALEDICTION OF WEEPING

Let me pour forth
My tears before thy face, whilst I stay here,
For thy face coins them, and thy stamp they bear,
And by this mintage they are something worth;
For thus they be
Pregnant of thee;
Fruits of much grief they are, emblems of more:
When a tear falls, that thou fall'st which it bore;
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a divers shore.

On a round ball
A workman, that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all.
So doth each tear,
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mixed with mine do overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved so.

O more than moon,
Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere!
Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear
To teach the sea, what it may do too soon;
Let not the wind
Example find
To do me more harm than it purposeth:
Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,
Whoe'er sighs most is cruellest, and hastes the other's death.

¶ WITCHCRAFT BY A PICTURE

I FIX *mine eye on thine, and there*
Pity my picture burning in thine eye;
My picture drowned in a transparent tear,
When I look lower I espy;
Hadst thou the wicked skill
By pictures made and marred, to kill,
How many ways might'st thou perform thy will?

But now I've drunk thy sweet salt tears,
And though thou pour more, I'll depart;
My picture vanished, vanish fears
That I can be endamaged by that art;
Though thou retain of me
One picture more, yet that will be,
Being in thine own heart, from all malice free.

¶ THE TOKEN

Send me some token, that my hope may live
Or that my easeless thoughts may sleep and rest;
Send me some honey, to make sweet my hive,
That in my passion I may hope the best.
I beg nor ribbon wrought with thine own hands,
To knit our loves in the fantastic strain
Of new-touched youth; nor ring to show the stands
Of our affection, that, as that's round and plain,
So should our loves meet in simplicity;
No, nor the corals, which thy wrist enfold,
Laced up together in congruity,
To show our thoughts should rest in the same hold;
No, nor thy picture, though most gracious,
And most desired, because best like the best
Nor witty lines, which are most copious,
Within the writings which thou hast addressed.
Send me nor this nor that, to increase my store,
But swear thou thinkest I love thee, and no more.

¶ THE FUNERAL

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm,
Nor question much,
That subtle wreath of hair, which crowns my arm;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch;
For 'tis my outward soul,
Viceroy to that which, unto heaven being gone,
Will leave this to control
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall
Through every part
Can tie those parts, and make me one of all,
Those hairs which upward grew, and strength and art
Have from a better brain,
Can better do it; except she meant that I
By this should know my pain,
As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemned to die.

Whate'er she meant by it, bury it with me,
For since I am
Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry,
If into other hands these relics came.
As 'twas humility
To afford to it all that a soul can do,
So 'tis some bravery,
That since you would have none of me, I bury some of you.

¶ THE RELIC

When my grave is broke up again
Some second guest to entertain,
(For graves have learned that womanhead
To be to more than one a bed)
And he that digs it, spies
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,
Will not he let us alone,
And think that there a loving couple lies,
Who thought that this device might be some way
To make their souls at the last busy day
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?

If this fall in a time, or land,
Where mis-devotion doth command,
Then he that digs us up will bring
Us to the bishop and the king,
To make us relics; then
Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I
A something else thereby.
All women shall adore us, and some men.
And, since at such time miracles are sought,
I would have that age by this paper taught
What miracles we harmless lovers wrought.

First, we loved well and faithfully,
Yet knew not what we loved, nor why;
Difference of sex no more we knew
Than our guardian angels do;
Coming and going, we
Perchance might kiss, but not between those meals;
Our hands ne'er touched the seals,
Which nature, injured by late law, sets free.
These miracles we did; but now alas!
All measure, and all language, I should pass,
Should I tell what a miracle she was.

¶ A FEVER

*O*H *do not die, for I shall hate*
All women so, when thou art gone,
That thee I shall not celebrate,
When I remember thou wast one.

But yet thou canst not die, I know;
To leave this world behind, is death;
But when thou from this world wilt go,
The whole world vapours with thy breath.

Or if, when thou, the world's soul, goest,
It stay, 'tis but thy carcase then;
The fairest woman but thy ghost,
But corrupt worms, the worthiest men.

O wrangling schools, that search what fire
Shall burn this world, had none the wit
Unto this knowledge to aspire,
That this her fever might be it?

And yet she cannot waste by this,
Nor long bear this torturing wrong,
For more corruption needful is,
To fuel such a fever long.

These burning fits but meteors be,
Whose matter in thee is soon spent;
Thy beauty, and all parts, which are thee,
Are unchangeable firmament.

Yet 'twas of my mind, seizing thee,
Though it in thee cannot persever;
For I had rather owner be
Of thee one hour, than all else ever.

¶ THE DISSOLUTION

She is dead; and all which die
To their first elements resolve;
And we were mutual elements to us,
And made of one another.
My body then doth hers involve,
And those things whereof I consist hereby
In me abundant grow, and burdenous,
And nourish not, but smother.
My fire of passion, sighs of air,
Water of tears, and earthly sad despair,
Which my materials be,
But near worn out by love's security,
She, to my loss, doth by her death repair.
And I might live long wretched so,
But that my fire doth with my fuel grow.
Now, as those active kings
Whose foreign conquest treasure brings,
Receive more, and spend more, and soonest break,
This (which I am amazed that I can speak)
This death, hath with my store
My use increased.
And so my soul, more earnestly released,
Will outstrip hers; as bullets flown before
A later bullet may o'ertake, the powder being more.

¶ A NOCTURNAL UPON ST. LUCY'S DAY, BEING THE SHORTEST DAY

'Tis the year's midnight, and it is the day's,
Lucy's, who scarce seven hours herself unmasks;
The sun is spent, and now his flasks
Send forth light squibs, no constant rays;
The world's whole sap is sunk;
The general balm the hydroptic earth hath drunk,
Whither, as to the bed's-feet, life is shrunk,
Dead and interred; yet all these seem to laugh,
Compared with me, who am their epitaph.

Study me then, you who shall lovers be
At the next world, that is, at the next spring;
For I am every dead thing,
In whom Love wrought new alchemy.
For his art did express
A quintessence even from nothingness,
From dull privations, and lean emptiness;
He ruin'd me, and I am re-begot
Of absence, darkness, death—things which are not.

All others, from all things, draw all that's good,
Life, soul, form, spirit, whence they being have;
I, by Love's limbec, am the grave
Of all, that's nothing. Oft a flood
Have we two wept, and so
Drowned the whole world, us two; oft did we grow,
To be two chaoses, when we did show
Care to aught else; and often absences
Withdrew our souls, and made us carcasses.

But I am by her death (which word wrongs her)
Of the first nothing the elixir grown;
Were I a man, that I were one
I needs must know; I should prefer,
If I were any beast,
Some ends, some means; yea plants, yea stones detest,
And love; all, all some properties invest.
If I an ordinary nothing were,
As shadow, a light, and body must be here.

But I am none; nor will my sun renew.
You lovers, for whose sake the lesser sun
At this time to the Goat is run
To fetch new lust, and give it you,
Enjoy your summer all,
Since she enjoys her long night's festival.
Let me prepare towards her, and let me call
This hour her vigil, and her eve, since this
Both the year's and the day's deep midnight is.

¶ THE PROHIBITION

Take heed of loving me;
At least remember, I forbade it thee;
Not that I shall repair my unthrifty waste
Of breath and blood, upon thy sighs and tears,
By being to thee then what to me thou wast;
But so great joy our life at once outwears.
Then, lest thy love by my death frustrate be,
If thou love me, take heed of loving me.

Take heed of hating me,
Or too much triumph in the victory;
Not that I shall be mine own officer,
And hate with hate again retaliate;
But thou wilt lose the style of conqueror,
If I, thy conquest, perish by thy hate.
Then, lest my being nothing lessen thee,
If thou hate me, take heed of hating me.

Yet love and hate me too;
So these extremes shall neither's office do;
Love me, that I may die the gentler way;
Hate me, because thy love's too great for me;
Or let these two themselves, not me, decay;
So shall I live thy stage, not triumph, be.
Lest thou thy love and hate and me undo,
To let me live, Oh love and hate me too!

¶ THE WILL

Before I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,
Great Love, some legacies; I here bequeath
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see;
If they be blind, then, Love, I give them thee;
My tongue to Fame; to ambassadors mine ears;
To women or the sea, my tears:
Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore
By making me serve her who had twenty more,
That I should give to none, but such as had too much before.

My constancy I to the planets give;
My truth to them who at the court do live;
Mine ingenuity and openness,
To Jesuits; to buffoons my pensiveness;
My silence to any who abroad hath been;
My money to a Capuchin:
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by appointing me
To love there, where no love received can be,
Only to give to such as have an incapacity.

My faith I give to Roman Catholics;
All my good works unto the Schismatics
Of Amsterdam; my best civility
And courtship to an University;
My modesty I give to soldiers bare;
My patience let gamesters share:
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that count my gifts indignity.

I give my reputation to those
Which were my friends; mine industry to foes;
To schoolmen I bequeath my doubtfulness;
My sickness to physicians, or excess;
To nature all that I in rhyme have writ;
And to my company my wit:
Thou, Love, by making me adore
Her, who begot this love in me before,
Taught'st me to make as though I gave, when I did but restore.

To him for whom the passing-bell next tolls,
I give my physic books; my written rolls
Of moral counsels I to Bedlam give;
My brazen medals unto them which live
In want of bread; to them which pass among
All foreigners, mine English tongue:
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, dost my gifts thus disproportion.

Therefore I'll give no more, but I'll undo
The world by dying, because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in mines, where none doth draw it forth;
And all your graces no more use shall have,
Than a sun-dial in a grave:
Thou, Love, taught'st me by making me
Love her who doth neglect both me and thee,
To invent and practise this one way to annihilate all three.

¶ LOVE'S DEITY

I LONG *to talk with some old lover's ghost,*
Who died before the god of love was born.
I cannot think that he, who then loved most,
Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
But since this god produced a destiny,
And that vice-nature, custom, lets it be,
I must love her that loves not me.

Sure, they which made him god, meant not so much,
Nor he in his young godhead practised it.
But when an even flame two hearts did touch,
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives. Correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
Love, till I love her, who loves me.

But every modern god will now extend
His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purlieu of the god of love.
Oh! were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be
I should love her, who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
As though I felt the worst that love could do?
Love might make me leave loving, or might try
A deeper plague, to make her love me too;
Which, since she loves before, I'm loth to see;
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,
If she whom I love, should love me.

¶ LOVE'S EXCHANGE

Love, any devil else but you
Would for a given soul give something too.
At court your fellows every day
Give the art of rhyming, huntsmanship, or play,
For them which were their own before;
Only I have nothing, which gave more,
But am, alas! by being lowly, lower.

I ask no dispensation now,
To falsify a tear, or sigh, or vow;
I do not sue from thee to draw
A non obstante *on nature's law;*
These are prerogatives, they inhere
In thee and thine; none should forswear
Except that he Love's minion were.

Give me thy weakness, make me blind,
Both ways, as thou and thine, in eyes and mind;
Love, let me never know that this
Is love, or, that love childish is;
Let me not know that others know
That she knows my pains, lest that so
A tender shame make me mine own new woe.

If thou give nothing, yet thou art just,
Because I would not thy first motions trust;
Small towns which stand stiff, till great shot
Enforce them, by war's law condition not;
Such in Love's warfare is my case;
I may not article for grace,
Having put Love at last to show this face:

This face, by which he could command
And change the idolatry of any land,
This face, which, wheresoe'er it comes,
Can call vowed men from cloisters, dead from tombs,
And melt both poles at once, and store
Deserts with cities, and make more
Mines in the earth, than quarries were before.

For, this Love is enraged with me,
Yet kills not; if I must example be
To future rebels, if the unborn
Must learn by my being cut up and torn,
Kill, and dissect me, Love; for this
Torture against thine own end is:
Racked carcasses make ill anatomies.

To make the doubt clear, that no woman's true,
Was it my fate to prove it strong in you?
Thought I, but one had breathed purest air;
And must she needs be false, because she's fair?
Is it your beauty's mark, or of your youth,
Or your perfection, not to study truth?
Or think you heaven is deaf, or hath no eyes,
Or those it hath smile at your perjuries?
Are vows so cheap with women, or the matter
Whereof they're made, that they are writ in water,
And blown away with wind? Or doth their breath,
Both hot and cold, at once make life and death?
Who could have thought so many accents sweet
Formed into words, so many sighs should meet
As from our hearts, so many oaths, and tears
Sprinkled among (all sweeter by our fears,
And the divine impression of stolen kisses,
That sealed the rest) should now prove empty blisses?
Did you draw bonds to forfeit? sign to break?
Or must we read you quite from what you speak,
And find the truth out the wrong way? or must
He first desire you false, would wish you just?
Oh, I profane! though most of women be
This kind of beast, my thoughts shall except thee;
My dearest love, though froward jealousy
With circumstance might urge thy inconstancy,
Sooner I'll think the sun will cease to cheer
The teeming earth, and that forget to bear;
Sooner that rivers will run back, or Thames
With ribs of ice in June would bind his streams;
Or nature, by whose strength the world endures,
Would change her course, before you alter yours.

But oh! that treacherous breast, to whom weak you
Did trust our counsels, and we both may rue,
Having his falsehood found too late; 'twas he
That made me cast you guilty, and you me;
Whilst he, black wretch, betrayed each simple word
We spake, unto the cunning of a third.
Cursed may he be, that so our love hath slain,
And wander on the earth, wretched as Cain,
Wretched as he, and not deserve least pity.
In plaguing him, let misery be witty;
Let all eyes shun him, and he shun each eye,
Till he be noisome as his infamy;
May he without remorse deny God thrice,
And not be trusted more on his soul's price;
And, after all self-torment, when he dies,
May wolves tear out his heart, vultures his eyes,
Swine eat his bowels, and his falser tongue
That uttered all, be to some raven flung;
And let his carrion corse be a longer feast
To the king's dogs, than any other beast.
Now have I cursed, let us our love revive;
In me the flame was never more alive.
I could begin again to court and praise,
And in that pleasure lengthen the short days
Of my life's lease; like painters that do take
Delight, not in made work, but whiles they make.
I could renew those times, when first I saw
Love in your eyes, that gave my tongue the law
To like what you liked; and at masks and plays
Commend the self-same actors, the same ways;
Ask how you did, and often with intent
Of being officious, be impertinent;

All which were such soft pastimes, as in these
Love was as subtly catched as a disease.
But being got, it is a treasure sweet,
Which to defend is harder than to get;
And ought not be profaned, on either part,
For though 'tis got by chance, 'tis kept by art.

¶ THE APPARITION

When by thy scorn, O murdress, I am dead,
And that thou thinkest thee free
From all solicitation from me,
Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
And thee, feigned vestal, in worse arms shall see:
Then thy sick taper will begin to wink,
And he, whose thou art then, being tired before,
Will, if thou stir, or pinch to wake him, think
Thou callest for more,
And, in false sleep, will from thee shrink;
And then, poor aspen wretch, neglected thou
Bathed in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lie
A verier ghost than I.
What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
Lest that preserve thee; and since my love is spent,
I had rather thou shouldst painfully repent,
Than by my threatenings rest still innocent.

¶ A JET RING SENT

Thou art not so black as my heart,
Nor half so brittle as her heart, thou art;
What would'st thou say? shall both our properties by
thee be spoke:
Nothing more endless, nothing sooner broke?

Marriage rings are not of this stuff;
Oh, why should ought less precious, or less tough,
Figure our loves? except in thy name thou have bid
it say:
"I'm cheap, and nought but fashion; fling me away."

Yet stay with me since thou art come,
Circle this finger's top, which didst her thumb;
Be justly proud, and gladly safe, that thou dost dwell
with me;
She that, oh! broke her faith, would soon break thee.

¶ THE MESSAGE

Send home my long strayed eyes to me,
Which, oh! too long, have dwelt on thee;
Yet since there they have learned such ill,
Such forced fashions,
And false passions,
That they be,
Made by thee
Fit for no good sight, keep them still.

Send home my harmless heart again,
Which no unworthy thought could stain;
But if it be taught by thine
To make jestings
Of protestings,
And cross both
Word and oath,
Keep it, for then 'tis none of mine.

Yet send me back my heart and eyes,
That I may know, and see thy lies,
And may laugh and joy, when thou
Art in anguish,
And dost languish
For some one
That will none,
Or prove as false as thou art now.

¶ SONG

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible to see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights,
Till age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou returnest, wilt tell me,
All strange wonders that befell thee,
And swear,
No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou findest one, let me know;
Such a pilgrimage were sweet.
Yet do not, I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

¶ THE BLOSSOM

LITTLE *thinkest thou, poor flower,*
Whom I've watched six or seven days,
And seen thy birth, and seen what every hour
Gave to thy growth, thee to this height to raise,
And now dost laugh and triumph on this bough,
Little thinkest thou,
That it will freeze anon, and that I shall
To-morrow find thee fallen, or not at all.

Little thinkest thou, poor heart,
That labourest yet to nestle thee,
And thinkest by hovering here to get a part
In a forbidden or forbidding tree,
And hopest her stiffness by long siege to bow,
Little thinkest thou,
That thou to-morrow, ere that sun doth wake,
Must with this sun and me a journey take.

But thou which lovest to be
Subtle to plague thyself, wilt say,
Alas! if you must go, what's that to me?
Here lies my business, and here I will stay;
You go to friends, whose love and means present
Various content
To your eyes, ears, and tongue, and every part;
If then your body go, what need you a heart?

Well then, stay here; but know,
When thou hast stayed and done thy most,
A naked thinking heart, that makes no show,
Is to a woman but a kind of ghost.

How shall she know my heart; or having none,
Know thee for one?
Practice may make her know some other part;
But take my word, she doth not know a heart.

Meet me at London, then,
Twenty days hence, and thou shalt see
Me fresher, and more fat, by being with men,
Than if I had stayed still with her and thee.
For God's sake, if you can, be you so too;
I will give you
There, to another friend, whom we shall find
As glad to have my body as my mind.

¶ LOVE'S DIET

To what a cumbersome unwieldiness
And burdenous corpulence my love had grown,
But that I did, to make it less,
And keep it in proportion,
Give it a diet, made it feed upon
That which love worst endures, discretion.

Above one sigh a day I allowed him not,
Of which my fortune, and my faults had part;
And if sometimes by stealth he got
A she sigh from my mistress' heart,
And thought to feast on that, I let him see
'Twas neither very sound, nor meant to me.

If he wrung from me a tear, I brined it so
With scorn or shame, that him it nourished not;
If he sucked hers, I let him know
'Twas not a tear which he had got,
His drink was counterfeit, as was his meat,
For eyes, which roll towards all, weep not, but sweat.

Whatever he would dictate I writ that,
But burnt my letters; when she writ to me,
And that that favour made him fat,
I said, "If any title be
Conveyed by this, ah! what doth it avail,
To be the fortieth name in an entail?"

Thus I reclaimed my buzzard love, to fly
At what, and when, and how, and where I choose;
Now negligent of sport I lie,
And now, as other falconers use,
I spring a mistress, swear, write, sigh and weep;
And, the game killed, or lost, go talk and sleep.

Oh! let me not serve so, as those men serve,
Whom honour's smokes at once fatten and starve,
Poorly enriched with great men's words or looks;
Nor so write my name in thy loving books
As those idolatrous flatterers, which still
Their princes' styles with many realms fulfil,
Whence they no tribute have, and where no sway.
Such services I offer as shall pay
Themselves; I hate dead names. Oh! then let me
Favourite in ordinary, or no favourite be.
When my soul was in her own body sheathed,
Not yet by oaths betrothed, nor kisses breathed
Into my purgatory, faithless thee,
Thy heart seemed wax, and steel thy constancy.
So careless flowers strewed on the water's face
The curled whirlpools suck, smack, and embrace,
Yet drown them; so the taper's beamy eye
Amorously twinkling beckons the giddy fly,
Yet burns his wings; and such the devil is,
Scarce visiting them who are entirely his.
When I behold a stream, which from the spring
Doth with doubtful melodious murmuring,
Or in a speechless slumber, calmly ride
Her wedded channel's bosom, and then chide
And bend her brows and swell, if any bough
Do but stoop down, or kiss her utmost brow;
Yet, if her often gnawing kisses win
The traitorous banks to gape, and let her in,
She rusheth violently, and doth divorce
Her from her native and her long-kept course,
And roars, and braves it, and in gallant scorn
In flattering eddies promising return,

She flouts her channel, who thenceforth is dry:
Then say I, "That is she, and this am I."
Yet let not thy deep bitterness beget
Careless despair in me, for that will whet
My mind to scorn; and oh! love dulled with pain
Was ne'er so wise, nor well armed, as disdain.
Then with new eyes I shall survey thee and spy
Death in thy cheeks, and darkness in thine eye,
Though hope bred faith and love, thus taught, I shall,
As nations do from Rome, from thy love fall;
My hate shall outgrow thine, and utterly
I will renounce thy dalliance; and when I
Am the recusant, in that resolute state
What hurts it me to be excommunicate?

¶ WOMAN'S CONSTANCY

Now thou hast loved me one whole day,
To-morrow when thou leavest, what wilt thou say?
Wilt thou then antedate some new-made vow?
Or say that now
We are not just those persons which we were?
Or that oaths made in reverential fear
Of Love, and his wrath, any may forswear?
Or, as true deaths true marriages untie,
So lovers' contracts, images of those,
Bind but till sleep, death's image, them unloose?
Or, your own end to justify,
For having purposed change and falsehood, you
Can have no way but falsehood to be true?
Vain lunatic, against these 'scapes I could
Dispute, and conquer, if I would;
Which I abstain to do,
For by to-morrow I may think so too.

¶ THE INDIFFERENT

I CAN *love both fair and brown;*
Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays;
Her who loves loneness best, and her who masks and plays;
Her whom the country formed, and whom the town;
Her who believes, and her who tries;
Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
And her who is dry cork, and never cries.
I can love her, and her, and you, and you;
I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you?
Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
Or have you all old vices spent and now would find out others?
Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
Oh! we are not, be not you so;
Let me, and do you, twenty know;
Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
Must I, who came to travel thorough you,
Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?

Venus heard me sigh this song;
And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore,
She heard not this till now; it should be so no more.
She went, examined, and returned ere long,
And said, "Alas! some two or three
Poor heretics in love there be,
Which think to stablish dangerous constancy.
But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
You shall be true to them who are false to you.'"

ELEGY

The heavens rejoice in motion; why should I
Abjure my so much loved variety,
And not with many youth and love divide?
Pleasure is none, if not diversified.
The sun that, sitting in the chair of light,
Sheds flame into what else so ever doth seem bright,
Is not contented at one sign to inn,
But ends his year, and with a new begins.
All things do willingly in change delight,
The fruitful mother of our appetite;
Rivers the clearer and more pleasing are,
Where their fair-spreading streams run wide and far;
And a dead lake, that no strange bark doth greet,
Corrupts itself, and what doth live in it.
Let no man tell me such a one is fair,
And worthy all alone my love to share.
Nature in her hath done the liberal part
Of a kind mistress, and employed her art,
To make her lovable, and I aver
Him not humane, that would turn back from her.
I love her well, and would, if need were, die
To do her service. But follows it that I
Must serve her only, when I may have choice
Of other beauties and in change rejoice?
The law is hard and shall not have my voice.
The last I saw in all extremes is fair,
And holds me in the sunbeams of her hair;
Her nymph-like features such agreements have,
That I could venture with her to the grave.
Another's brown; I like her not the worse;
Her tongue is soft and takes me with discourse.
Others, for that they well descended are,

Do in my love obtain as large a share;
And though they be not fair, 'tis much with me
To win their love only for their degree.
And though I fail of my required ends,
The attempt is glorious and itself commends.
How happy were our sires in ancient times,
Who held plurality of loves no crime.
With them it was accounted charity
To stir up race of all indifferently;
Kindreds were not exempted from the bands:
Which with the Persian still in usage stands.
Women were then no sooner asked than won,
And what they did was honest and well done.
But since this title Honour hath been used,
Our weak credulity hath been abused;
The golden laws of nature are repealed
Which our first fathers in such reverence held;
Our liberty reversed and charters gone;
And we made servants to Opinion;
A monster in no certain shape attired,
And whose original is much desired,
Formless at first, but, going on, it fashions
And doth prescribe manners and laws to nations.
Here love received immedicable harms,
And was despoiled of his daring arms;
A greater want than is his daring eyes,
He lost those awful wings with which he flies,
His sinewy bow and those immortal darts,
Wherewith he is wont to bruise resisting hearts.
Only some few, strong in themselves and free,
Retain the seeds of ancient liberty,
Following that part of love, although depressed,
Yet make a throne for him within their breast,

In spite of modern censures him avowing
Their sovereign, all service him allowing.
Amongst which troop although I am the least,
Yet equal in perfection with the best,
I glory in subjection of his hand,
Nor ever did decline his least command;
For in whatever form the message came
My heart did open and receive the same.
But time will in his course a point descry
When I this loved service must deny;
For our allegiance temporary is;
With firmer age returns our liberties.
What time in years and judgement we reposed
Shall not so easily be to change disposed,
Nor to the art of several eyes obeying,
But beauty with true worth securely weighing;
Which being found assembled in some one
We'll love her ever, and love her alone.

¶ ELEGY

Nature's lay idiot, I taught thee to love,
And in that sophistry, oh! thou dost prove
Too subtle; fool, thou didst not understand
The mystic language of the eye nor hand;
Nor couldst thou judge the difference of the air
Of sighs, and say, "This lies, this sounds despair";
Nor by the eye's water call a malady
Desperately hot, or changing feverously.
I had not taught thee then the alphabet
Of flowers, how they, devisefully being set
And bound up, might with speechless secrecy
Deliver errands mutely, and mutually.
Remember since all thy words used to be
To every suitor, "Aye, if my friends agree;"
Since household charms, thy husband's name to teach,
Were all the love-tricks that thy wit could reach;
And since an hour's discourse could scarce have made
One answer in thee, and that ill arrayed
In broken proverbs, and torn sentences:
Thou art not by so many duties his,
That from the world's common having severed thee,
Inlaid thee, neither to be seen, nor see,
As mine, who have with amorous delicacies
Refined thee into a blissful paradise.
Thy graces and good words my creatures be;
I planted knowledge and life's tree in thee;
Which oh! shall strangers taste? Must I, alas!
Frame and enamel plate, and drink in glass?
Chafe wax for other's seals? break a colt's force,
And leave him then, being made a ready horse?

¶ LOVE'S USURY

FOR *every hour that thou wilt spare me now,*
I will allow,
Usurious god of love, twenty to thee,
When with my brown my grey hairs equal be.
Till then, Love, let my body reign, and let
Me travel, sojourn, snatch, plot, have, forget,
Resume my last year's relict; think that yet
We had never met.

Let me think any rival's letter mine,
And at next nine
Keep midnight's promise; mistake by the way
The maid, and tell the lady of that delay;
Only let me love none; no, not the sport;
From country grass to comfitures of court,
Or city's quelque-choses, *let report*
My mind transport.

This bargain's good; if when I'm old, I be
Inflamed by thee,
If thine own honour, or my shame and pain,
Thou covet most, at that age thou shalt gain.
Do thy will then; then subject and degree
And fruit of love, Love, I submit to thee.
Spare me till then; I'll bear it, though she be
One that loves me.

¶ ELEGY

WHOEVER loves, if he do not propose
The right true end of love, he's one that goes
To sea for nothing but to make him sick.
Love is a bear-whelp born; if we o'er-lick
Our love, and force it new strange shapes to take,
We err, and of a lump a monster make.
Were not a calf a monster, that were grown
Faced like a man, though better than his own?
Perfection is in unity; prefer
One woman first, and then one thing in her.
I, when I value gold, may think upon
The ductileness, the application,
The wholesomeness, the ingenuity,
From rust, from soil, from fire ever free;
But if I love it, 'tis because 'tis made
By our new nature, use, the soul of trade.
All this in women we might think upon,
(If women had them) and yet love but one.
Can men more injure women than to say
They love them for that, by which they're not they?
Makes virtue woman? must I cool my blood
Till I both be and find one wise and good?
May barren angels love so. But if we
Make love to woman, virtue is not she,
As beauty is not, nor wealth. He that strays thus
From her to hers is more adulterous
Than if he took her maid. Search every sphere
And firmament, our Cupid is not there.
He's an infernal God, and underground
With Pluto dwells, where gold and fire abound.
Men to such gods their sacrificing coals
Did not in altars lay, but pits and holes.

Although we see celestial bodies move
Above the earth, the earth we till and love.
So we her airs contemplate, words and heart,
And virtues; but we love the centric part.
Nor is the soul more worthy, or more fit
For love, than this, as infinite as it.
But in attaining this desired place
How much they err, that set out at the face?
The hair a forest is of ambushes,
Of springes, snares, fetters, and manacles;
The brow becalms us when 'tis smooth and plain,
And when 'tis wrinkled, shipwrecks us again;
Smooth, 'tis a paradise, where we would have
Immortal stay, but wrinkled 'tis a grave.
The nose, like to the first meridian, runs
Not 'twixt an east and west, but 'twixt two suns;
It leaves a cheek, a rosy hemisphere,
On either side, and then directs us where
Upon the islands fortunate we fall,
Not faint Canaries, but ambrosial,
Her swelling lips, to which when we are come,
We anchor there, and think ourselves at home,
For they seem all. There Siren's songs and there
Wise Delphic oracles do fill the ear;
There, in a creek where chosen pearls do swell,
The remora, her cleaving tongue, doth dwell.
These and the glorious promontory, her chin,
O'erpast, and the straight Hellespont between
The Sestos and Abydos of her breasts,
Not of two lovers, but two loves, the nests,
Succeeds a boundless sea, but yet thine eye
Some island moles may scattered there descry;

And sailing towards her India, in that way
Shall at her fair Atlantic navel stay.
Though thence the current be thy pilot made,
Yet, ere thou be where thou wouldst be embayed,
Thou shalt upon another forest set,
Where many shipwreck, and no further get.
When thou art there, consider what this chase
Misspent, by thy beginning at the face.
Rather set out below; practise thy art;
Some symmetry the foot hath with that part
Which thou dost seek, and is thy map for that,
Lovely enough to stop, but not stay at.
Least subject to disguise and change it is;
Men say the devil never can change his;
It is the emblem that hath figured
Firmness; 'tis the first part that comes to bed.
Civility we see refined; the kiss,
Which at the face began, transplanted is,
Since to the hand, since to the imperial knee,
Now at the papal foot delights to be.
If kings think that the nearer way, and do
Rise from the foot, lovers may do so too;
For, as free spheres move faster far than can
Birds, whom the air resists, so may that man
Which goes this empty and ethereal way,
Than if at beauty's elements he stay.
Rich Nature in women wisely made
Two purses, and their mouths aversely laid.
They then, which to the lower tribute owe,
That way which that exchequer looks must go;
He which doth not, his error is as great
As who by clyster gives the stomach meat.

¶ LOVE'S ALCHEMY

Some that have deeper digged love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happiness doth lie.
I have loved, and got, and told,
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I should not find that hidden mystery.
Oh! 'tis imposture all;
And as no chemic yet the elixir got,
But glorifies his pregnant pot,
If by the way to him befall
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So, lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-seeming summer's night.

Our ease, our thrift, our honour, and our day,
Shall we for this vain bubble's shadow pay?
Ends love in this, that my man
Can be as happy as I can, if he can
Endure the short scorn of a bridegroom's play?
That loving wretch that swears,
'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
Which he in her angelic finds,
Would swear as justly, that he hears,
In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.
Hope not for mind in women; at their best,
Sweetness and wit, they are but mummy, possessed.

¶ FAREWELL TO LOVE

Whilst yet to prove
I thought there was some deity in love,
So did I reverence, and gave
Worship; as atheists at their dying hour
Call, what they cannot name, an unknown power,
As ignorantly did I crave.
Thus when
Things not yet known are coveted by men,
Our desires give them fashion, and so
As they wax lesser, fall, as they size, grow.

But, from late fair,
His highness sitting in a golden chair
Is not less cared for after three days
By children, than the thing which lovers so
Blindly admire, and with such worship woo;
Being had, enjoying it decays;
And thence,
What before pleased them all, takes but one sense,
And that so lamely, as it leaves behind
A kind of sorrowing dullness to the mind.

Ah, cannot we,
As well as cocks and lions, jocund be
After such pleasures, unless wise
Nature decreed (since each such act, they say,
Diminisheth the length of life a day)
This; as she would man should despise
The sport,
Because that other curse of being short,
And only for a minute made to be,
Eagers desire to raise posterity.

Since so, my mind
Shall not desire what no man else can find;
I'll no more dote and run
To pursue things which had endamaged me;
And when I come where moving beauties be,
(As men do when the summer's sun
Grows great)
Though I admire their greatness, shun their heat.
Each place can afford shadows; if all fail,
'Tis but applying worm-seed to the tail.

¶ DIVINE POEM

O H, to vex me, contraries meet in one:
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot
A constant habit; that when I would not,
I change in vows and in devotion.
As humourous is my contrition
As my profane love and as soon forgot:
As riddlingly distempered, cold and hot,
As praying, as mute, as infinite, as none.
I durst not view heaven yesterday; and today
In prayers and flattering speeches I court God:
Tomorrow I quake with true fear of his rod.
So my devout fits come and go away
Like a fantastic ague: save that here
Those are my best days, when I shake with fear.

¶ DIVINE POEM

SINCE *she whom I loved hath paid her last debt*
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
And her soul early into heaven ravished,
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set.
Here the admiring her my mind did whet
To seek thee, God; so streams do show their head;
But though I have found thee and thou my thirst hast fed,
A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.
But why should I beg more love, whenas thou
Dost woo my soul for hers; offering all thine:
And dost not only fear lest I allow
My love to saints and angels, things divine,
But in thy tender jealousy dost doubt
Lest the world, flesh, yea devil, put thee out.

UPB

¶ DIVINE POEM

BATTER *my heart, three personed God; for you*
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend.
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new.
I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labour to admit you; but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betrothed unto your enemy:
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthral me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

THE EDITOR'S NOTE

The choice and arrangement of these poems is based on their aesthetic and psychological interest for the modern reader and does not follow any of the earlier editions. The selection has been confined to Donne's subjective poetry and does not include any of the conventional complimentary Letters and Epithalamia, which were made to order after the fashion of his time. On the other hand, it takes in such poems as express Donne's personal reflections on the nature of the emotions, rather than the emotions themselves, even when their theme happens to be religious or invective. First in order come the great love poems, expressing absolute, static and ecstatic love; then, the lighter ones on wooing and winning and the joy of the senses; then, those that deal with parting and grief; then, the more or less disillusioned and cynical analyses of love and lovers; and finally, the poems in which earthly and heavenly love are contrasted—and compared.

The text of this edition follows, in general, the first edition of Donne's Poems (1633). Those poems which are not contained in the 1633 collection have been taken from the earliest edition in which they appear. But since none of Donne's poems were published in his lifetime and no edition can therefore be considered authoritative, manuscripts and later seventeenth-century editions have been freely used to supply more intelligible and metrical readings for difficult passages in the basic text. In a few instances, where the texts are obviously corrupt, the emendations of Mr. H. J. C. Grierson's invaluable edition have been adopted.

The spelling has been modernized throughout; and the punctuation modified, not systematically but wherever the seventeenth-century lack of system left an unnecessary obscurity.

Scansion has been left entirely to the reader. He will find that much of the difficulty in scanning Donne's lines disappears if one remembers the following points:

(1) In the past participle ending -ed and in the second person singular ending -est, the e may be either completely mute, or lightly sounded as an extra unstressed syllable, or fully accented to represent an integral part (either stressed or unstressed) of the foot.

See, for instance, p. 29, l. 25:

– ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ –

When thou | sighest, thou | sighest not | wind;

where the extra syllable is inessential and almost soundless; but, p. 75, l. 24:

∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –

And was | despoi|led of | his dar|ing arms;

where the sounding of the extra syllable is essential to the metre.

(2) Words containing the letter group ti (or si or ci) before a vowel, in which, according to modern pronunciation, the i is absorbed into the sibilant, may, according to seventeenth-century usage, sound the ti (or si or ci) as a syllable separate from the vowel and consonants following.

For instance: ' discretï-on ', ' partï-al ', ' Asï-a ', ' ancï-ent '.

(3) In a number of words, Donne and his contemporaries stressed a syllable other than the one which is stressed in modern pronunciation.

For instance: ' contémplate ', ' quíntessence ', ' recúsant ', ' cémented ', ' envý '.

V. M.

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